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The Spy on the Fourth Floor

There is a story that made the rounds last year about an Israeli intelligence agent who travels thousands of miles to contact another agent in a foreign city.

The agent goes directly to the apartment house where he has been told he will find the other agent, Goldberg. In the apartment house lobby he finds two Goldbergs listed and, taking a chance, presses the buzzer for Goldberg on the second floor.

At the man's door, the agent gives the password, whereupon Goldberg replies, "Oh, you want Goldberg the spy. He's on the fourth floor."

No one has suggested that the Central Intelligence Agency is quite that inept. But several strident voices were raised in Congress this week, demanding that a watchdog committee be set up to oversee the CIA's operations.

Sen. Stephen M. Young (D., Ohio) declares that CIA bungling has been harmful to this Nation. He added that the CIA has "in effect been making foreign policy and that it has "gradually taken on the character of an invisible government, answerable only to itself."

Sen. Young's views have been expressed before. Other Congressmen have expressed misgivings at authorizing the vast sums needed to finance CIA operations with no way of determining how many cloaks and daggers are actually purchased.

In a free society, an organization like the CIA is bound to arouse some suspicion and mistrust. But in the highly competitive espionage game, anonymity, as Goldberg probably learned to his sorrow, is an essential element.